Fun Facts:

**Asteroid Vesta**

* **Other Names:**
  + 4 Vesta
* **Basics:**
  + This is the brightest asteroid visible in the sky and 2nd largest in the asteroid belt by mass and size.
  + Diameter: 290 miles (although it is not spherical)
  + Orbital Period: 3.63 years
  + Distance from the Sun: 2.36 AU (219 million miles)
  + Surface area: about 500,000 square miles (about the size of Pakistan)
  + Temperature on the surface: range from -4⁰ F to -310⁰ F
* **History:**
  + Discovered by German astronomer Heinrich Wilhelm Matthias Olbers on March 29, 1807. After Ceres was discovered in 1801 and Pallas in 1802, Olbers theorized that there must be more, so he went asteroid hunting.
* **Other Notes:**
  + Vesta is named after the Roman goddess of hearth, home and family.
  + It comprises almost 10% of all the mass in the asteroid belt.
  + Its most prominent feature is the Rheasilvia Crater, which stretches 313 miles across its face, covering 90% of the length of the asteroid. Its about 12 miles deep. This is one of the largest craters in the solar system.
    - The crater happened less than 1 billion years ago and shook off about 1% of the total mass of the asteroid.
    - This collision created the howardite-eucrite-diogenite (HED) meteorites, which comprise 5% of all the meteorites that fall to earth…so we already know quite a bit about the geology of Vesta.
  + It also contains deep grooves & troughs that would dwarf the Grand Canyon.
  + On July 16, 2011, the *Dawn* spacecraft entered orbit around Vesta and 1 year of exploration. *Dawn* left Vesta on September 5, 2012 to head for Ceres.